



# The Pause Between



Wider site context boundary







Westgate Library site boundary

The Westgate Library lobby is situated in a unique location between the quiet, reflective atmosphere of the library above and the bustling commercial area of the Westgate Shopping Centre. The current double-height space serves mostly as a route to gain access to the main part of the library rather than an intentional environment. The lobby is reimagined in this project as a transitional space that serves as a buffer between these diverse environments. The design creates a space to stop, think, and re-evaluate before entering the library through the use of soft forms, natural materials, and thoughtfully chosen environmental conditions. The proposal aims to improve the interaction between the city, the shopping center, and the library by converting a neglected area into an intentional threshold. This aims to increase foot traffic and engagement while also improving the visitor's experience upon entrance. The end product is a restorative interior that supports wellbeing and promotes a more significant transition between activity and learning through the use of materiality, atmosphere, and spatial sequence.



Westgate Shopping center side elevation

-  Westgate, Oxford
-  9:00am – 8:00pm
-  No specific capacity
-  Free to public



Westgate Shopping center front elevation



Pullman said, looking up, "was the room I had myself."  
 Lyra Silvertonque, Lyra Belacqua, but really just Lyra: one of those characters in literature — Pip, Emma, Lolita — who is on first-name terms with her public. Pullman has written 35 books, mostly for children and young adults, but Lyra stands out as his protagonist, a plucky scamp of mysterious origins who lives among Oxford academics and is accompanied through life, like almost everyone in the universe of the "Dark Materials," by her demon, a shifting animal self.  
 Over the three books — 1995's "Northern Lights" (published in the United States under the title "The Golden Compass"), 1997's "The Subtle Knife" and 2000's "The Amber Spyglass" — Pullman's ambition is more optimistic. In a lecture called "The Republic of Heaven," from the forthcoming essay collection "Daemon Voices," he spoke of the challenge "to reclaim a vision of heaven from the wreck of religion; to realize that our human nature demands meaning and joy ... to accept that this meaning and joy will involve a passionate love of the physical world."  
 C. S. Lewis ("a paranoid bigot," according to Pullman) provided anti-inspiration. Pullman could never bear the heavy Christian moralizing in "Narnia," but he objected most of all to Lewis's censorious judgment of his own characters, such as Susan, the second oldest of the Pevensie children, who is excluded from Narnia after indulging in



**Kelly**  
 Passed through a few shops on the way to library. Requires a quick decompression.



**Oliver**  
 Child overstimulated by the crowds. Using the space to relax.



**John and Eileen**  
 Elderly couple seeking an atmospheric space to sit down.



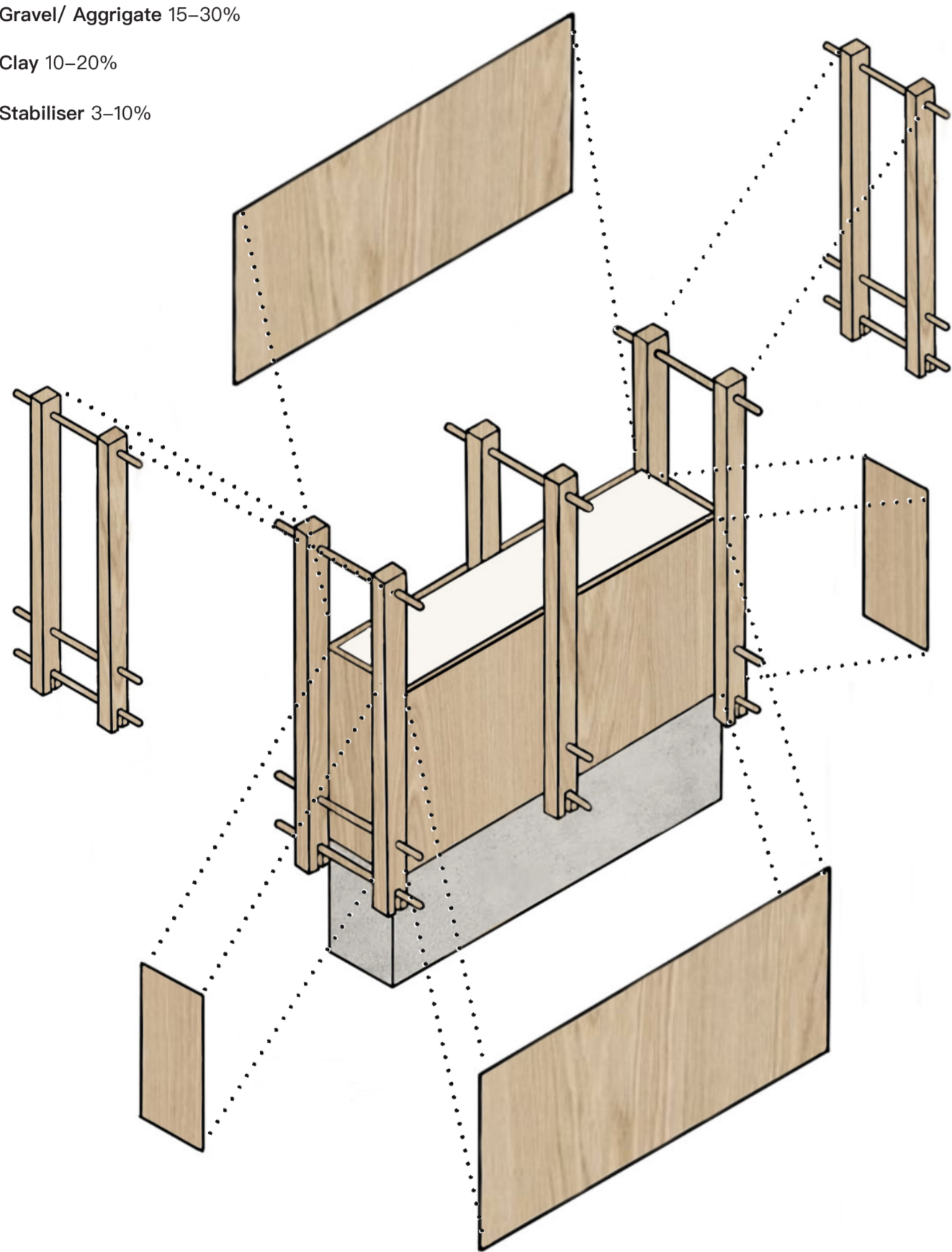
**Timothy**  
 Using library to work hard. Needs a space to focus before starting.



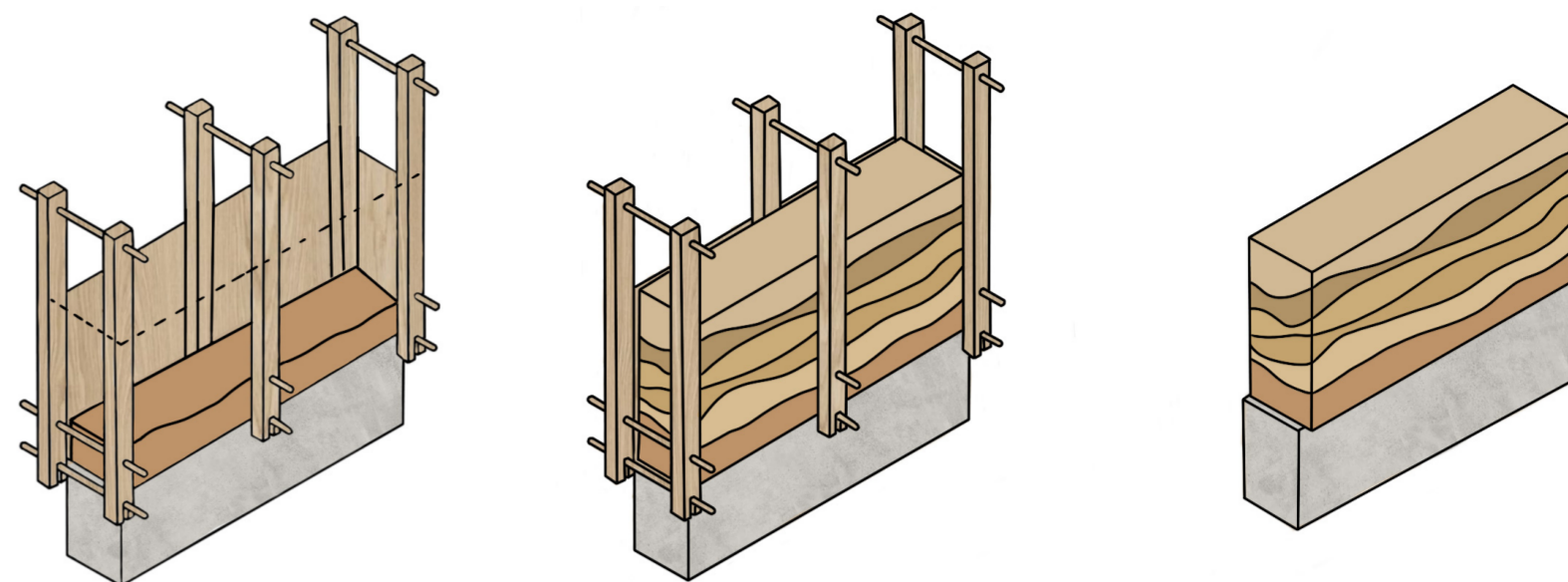
# Rammed Earth

A mixture of soil, sand, gravel, and a tiny bit of stabiliser typically cement or lime is compacted into formwork to create rammed earth, a solid, long lasting building material. Because of its higher thermal mass, buildings can remain warm in colder climates and cool in warmer ones. Due to its low energy consumption and use of locally sourced soil, the material is highly sustainable, fire-resistant, non-toxic, and has a natural, earthy appearance.

- Sand 50–70%
- Gravel/ Aggregate 15–30%
- Clay 10–20%
- Stabiliser 3–10%



Layers of dirt, sand, clay, and gravel are compacted inside temporary formwork to create rammed earth walls. Each layer is compacted until it becomes solid and stone-like, usually using pneumatic tools but also using hand tampers in the past. For enhanced strength, a little amount of stabiliser, such as cement may be used. The warm, organic quality of rammed earth is shown when the formwork is removed, revealing the wall's natural horizontal patterns.



Adding all the elements together.



Then mixing all together thoroughly.



Adding water to get the consistency.



Perform the squeeze test to see if mixture is ready.

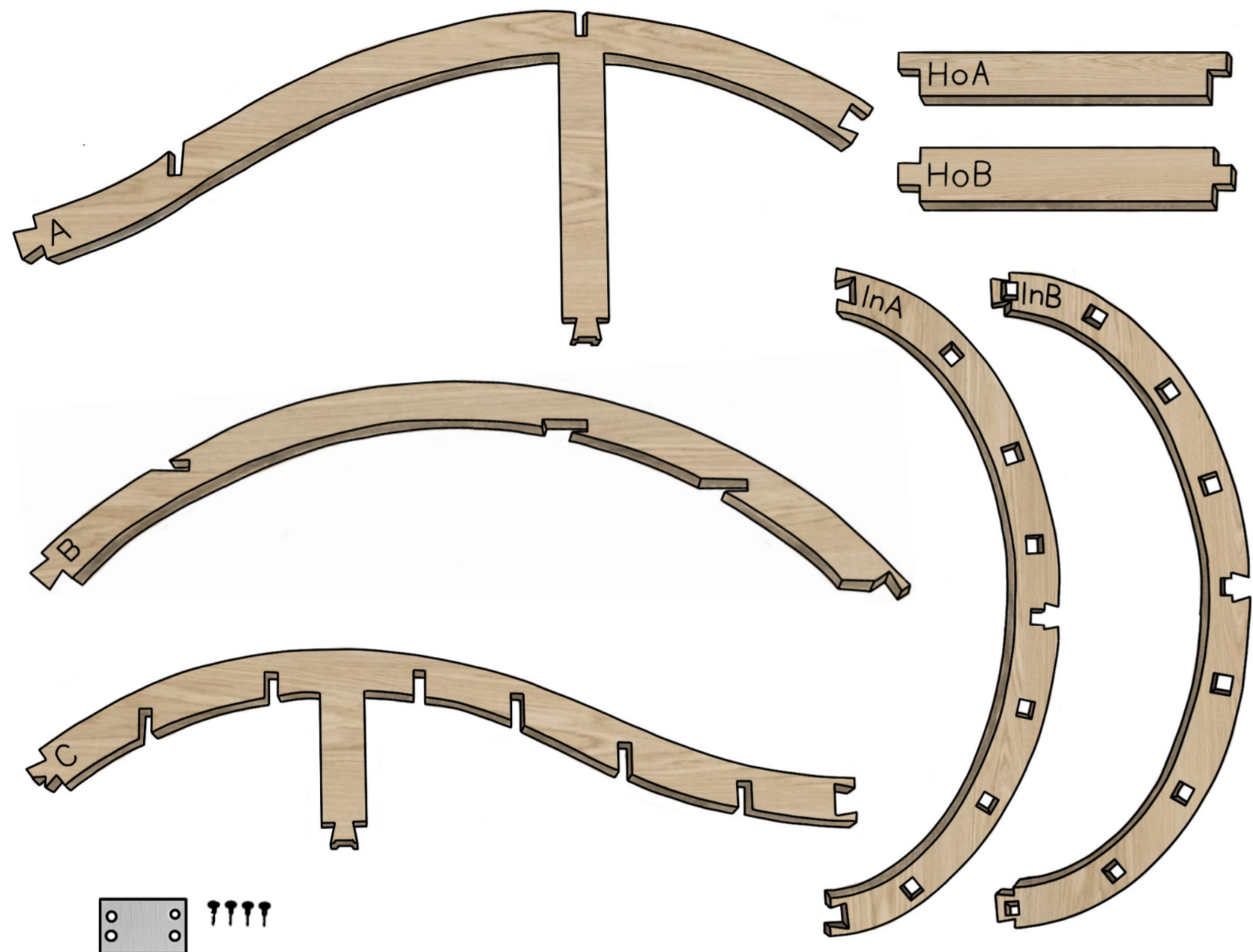
The rammed earth components are intended to be a tangible representation of Oxford, incorporating elements of the city's cultural and geological landscape into the interior of the library. The design is inspired by locally accessible earth components found across Oxfordshire, such as river sands, clay rich subsoils, and limestone aggregates that have historically been used in the city's building, rather than depending on imported resources. Through the use of locally produced materials, the design establishes a link between the library and its larger surroundings.



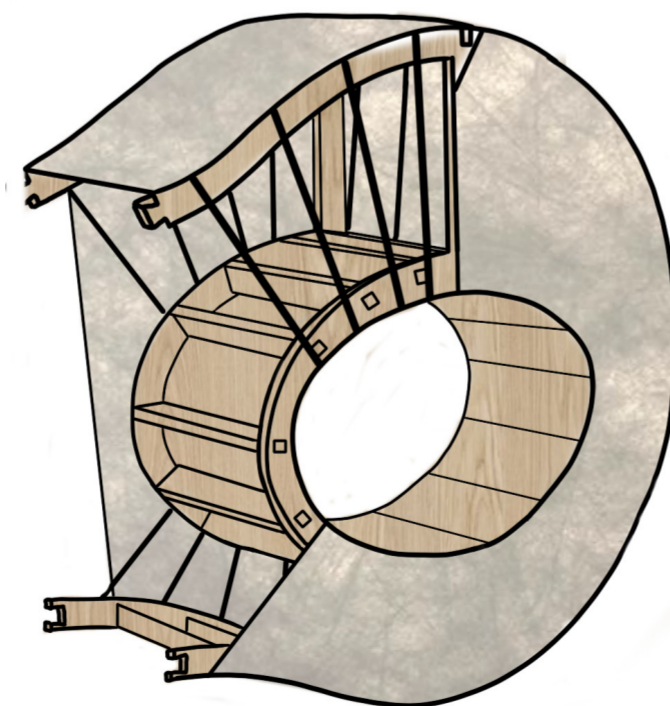
"This rammed earth seating really makes me feel grounded so I can decompress"

# Timber

A wood frame structure is a building system in which the building is supported by a load-bearing framework made up of timber beams and posts. While non-structural infill materials like soil, wood panels, or windows are utilized to surround the area, the frame bears the structural loads. A timber frame structure belongs to the organic material family, derived from renewable wood resources and valued for its structural strength, warmth, and tactile qualities.



By preventing spreading stresses and lessening bending in the main frame, the tensioned parts served to stabilise the structure. Through a combination of compression and tension, they more effectively distribute forces while enabling the curved geometry to retain its shape under load.

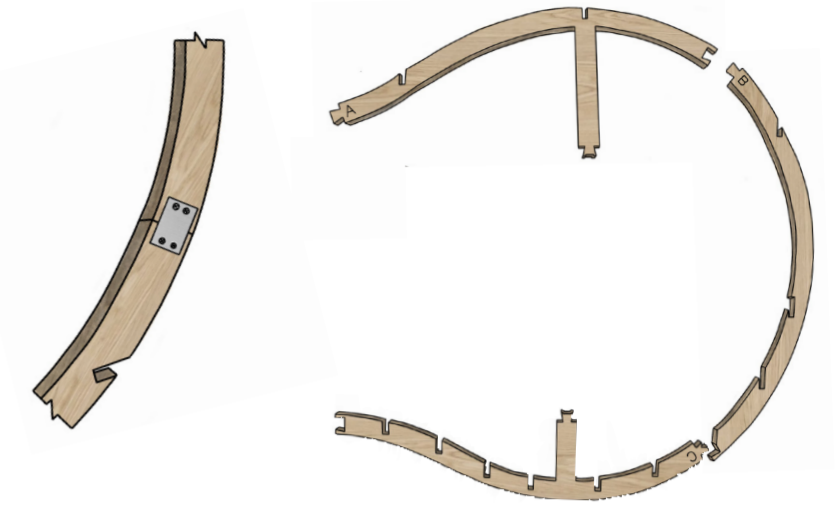


The timber frame is then covered in a layer of fiberglass. Lights are installed on the inside to give it its glow.

## Construction Manual

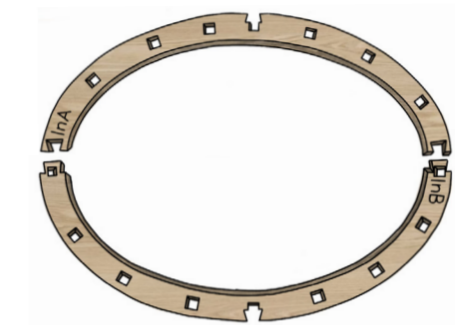
### Step 1: Construct Side Frame (Repeat Twice)

1. Lay "B" out flat on the ground.
2. Insert "A" into "B" upper slot.
3. Insert "C" into "B" bottom slot.
4. Line up each joint's pre-drilled holes.
5. Cover each joint with a "metal connection"
6. Use the included screws to secure



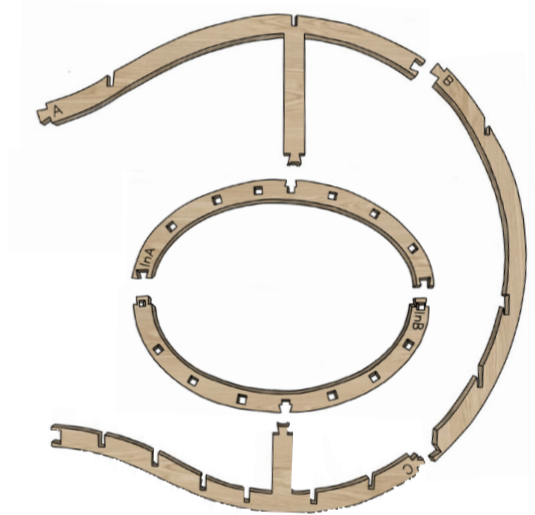
### Step 2: Put the Inner Ring Together (Repeat twice)

1. Align "A" and "B" from beginning to end.
2. Attach using the built-in slots, then secure with screws and metal connectors.
3. Verify that the ring curves smoothly.



### Step 3: Fit the Side Frame to the Inner Ring

1. In the side frame, place the "InA"+"InB"
2. Align the square cutouts on "A", "B" and "C" with tabs.
3. Firmly press until connected
4. At every point of contact, install "metal connections"
5. Fasten using screws  
The inner ring and side frame should be flush.

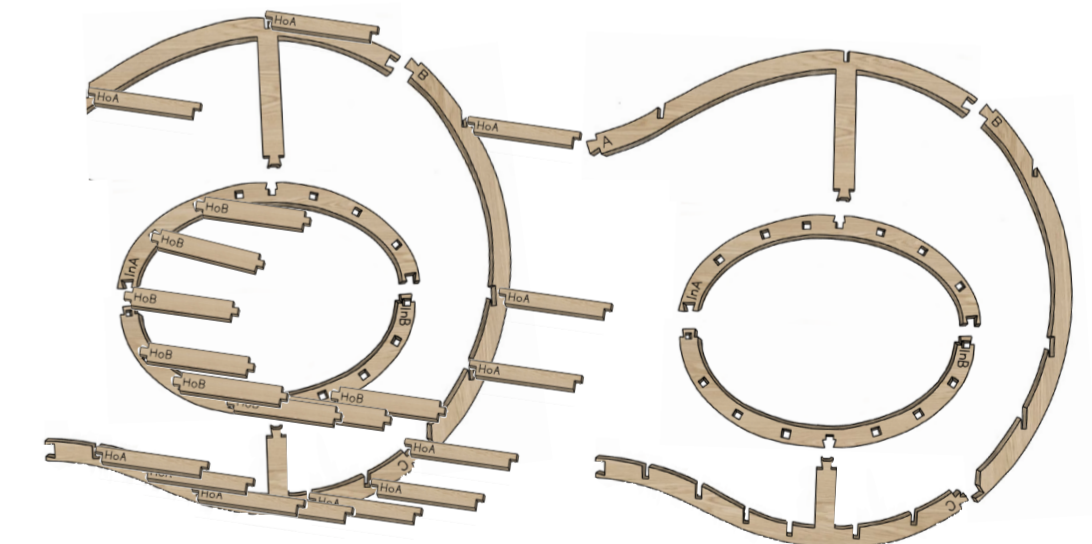


### Step 4: Continue to the Second Side

To make a second identical side, repeat Steps 1-3.

### Step 5: Join Inner Support (HoA) on Both Sides

1. Keep both side assemblies straight.
2. Position "HoA" around the inner circle
3. Line up HoA with inner ring slots.
4. Fully insert the tabs
5. Where indicated, add "L-shaped metal connectors"
6. Use screws to secure

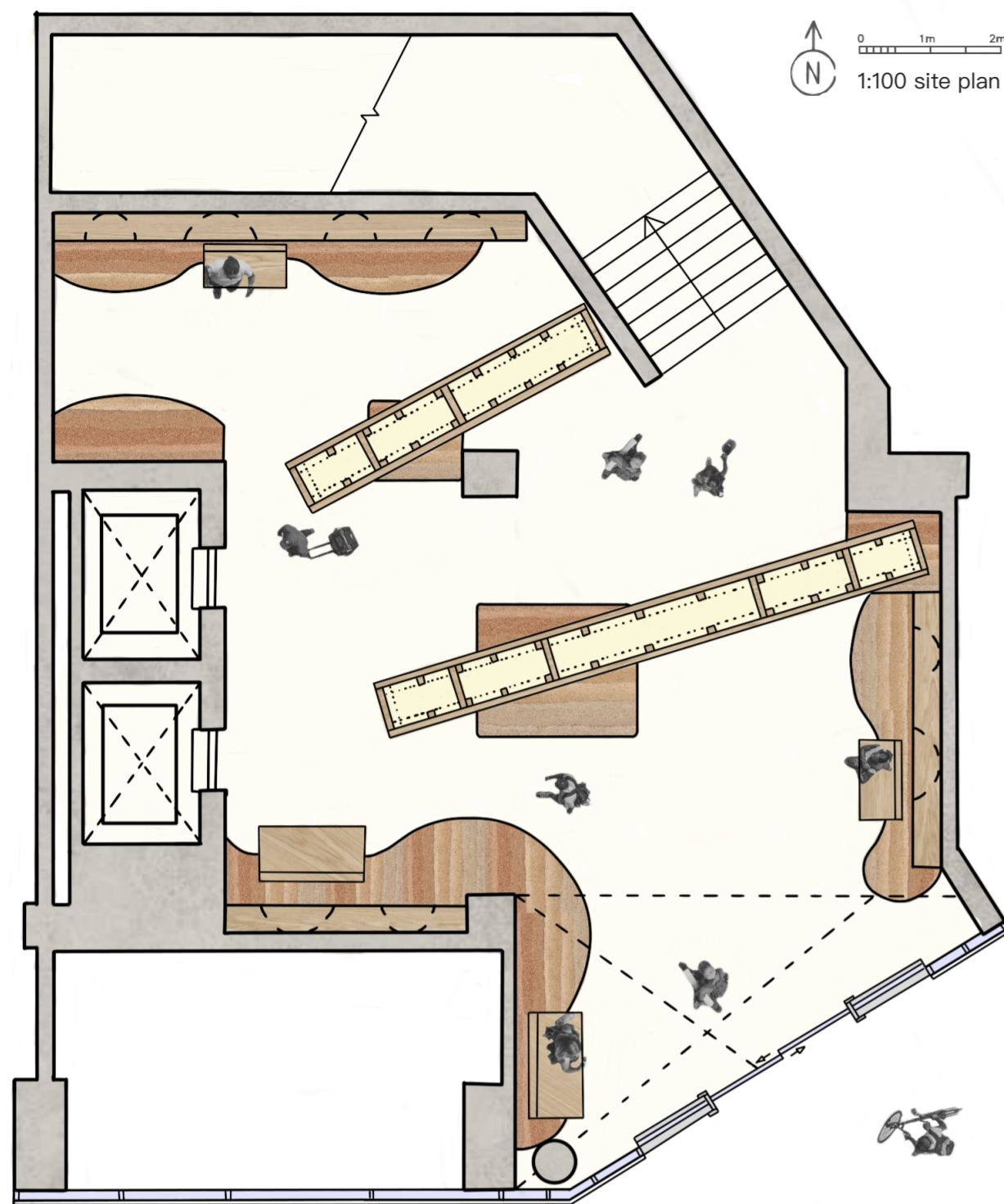


### Step 6: Attach Outer Support "HoB" on Both Sides

1. Arrange "HoB" around the outside perimeter
2. Use "L shaped metal connectors" to secure
3. Use screws to attach



"This space is the perfect place for me to play and relax from the busy area outside"



### Wooden frame reuse adaptations



#### Community Cafe Space:

Creates a cocooned shell to turn any space into a meeting area. The fiber glass provided a covered space while also allowing light to penetrate it. Provides a space where people can gather and deepen relationships.



#### Community garden pavillion:

Reused as a shelter and gathering space in a community garden/ park. The timber frame provides a strong structure for plants to grow off and the weather resistant fiber glass roof provides coverage. It encourages outdoor connection and urban green spaces.

### Rammed Earth as a circular material

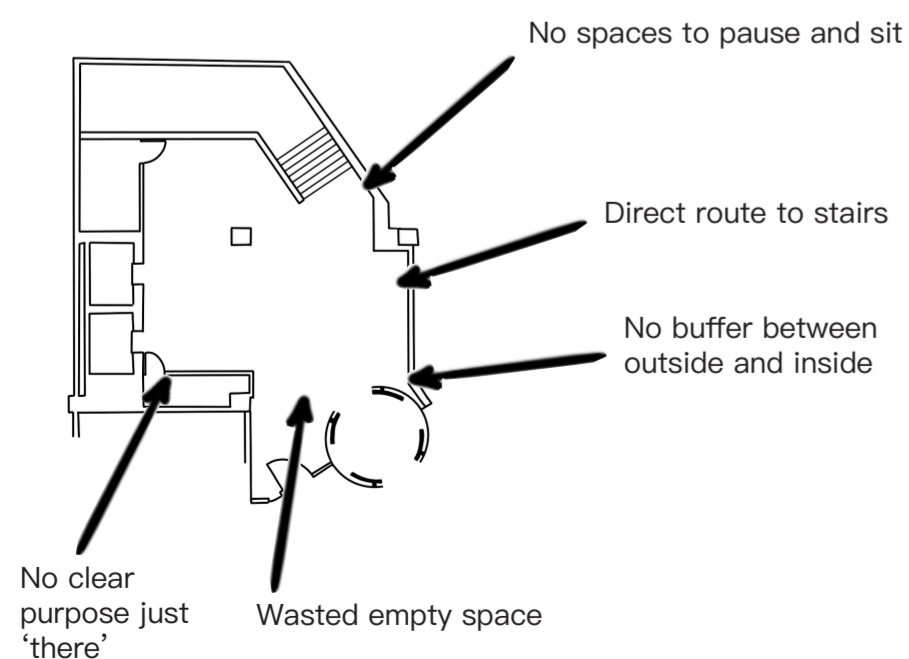


The circular material process is used in the rammed earth seating. The components which are made from locally sourced Oxfordshire earth, serve as both furniture. In order to save waste and increase the material's worth beyond a single use, the seats can be crushed, remixed, and reformed into new architectural elements. For example these images show that it is crushed and reshaped into planters and other forms of seating. This strategy strengthens the project's ties to the surrounding environment while lowering embodied carbon.

**43%**  
Lower carbon emissions when locally sourced earth is used.

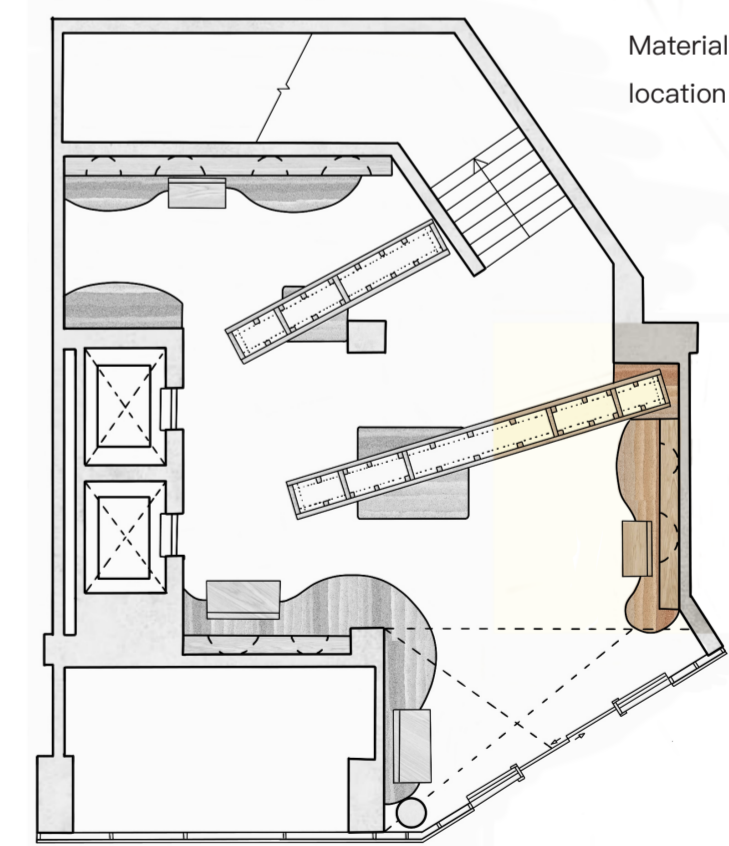
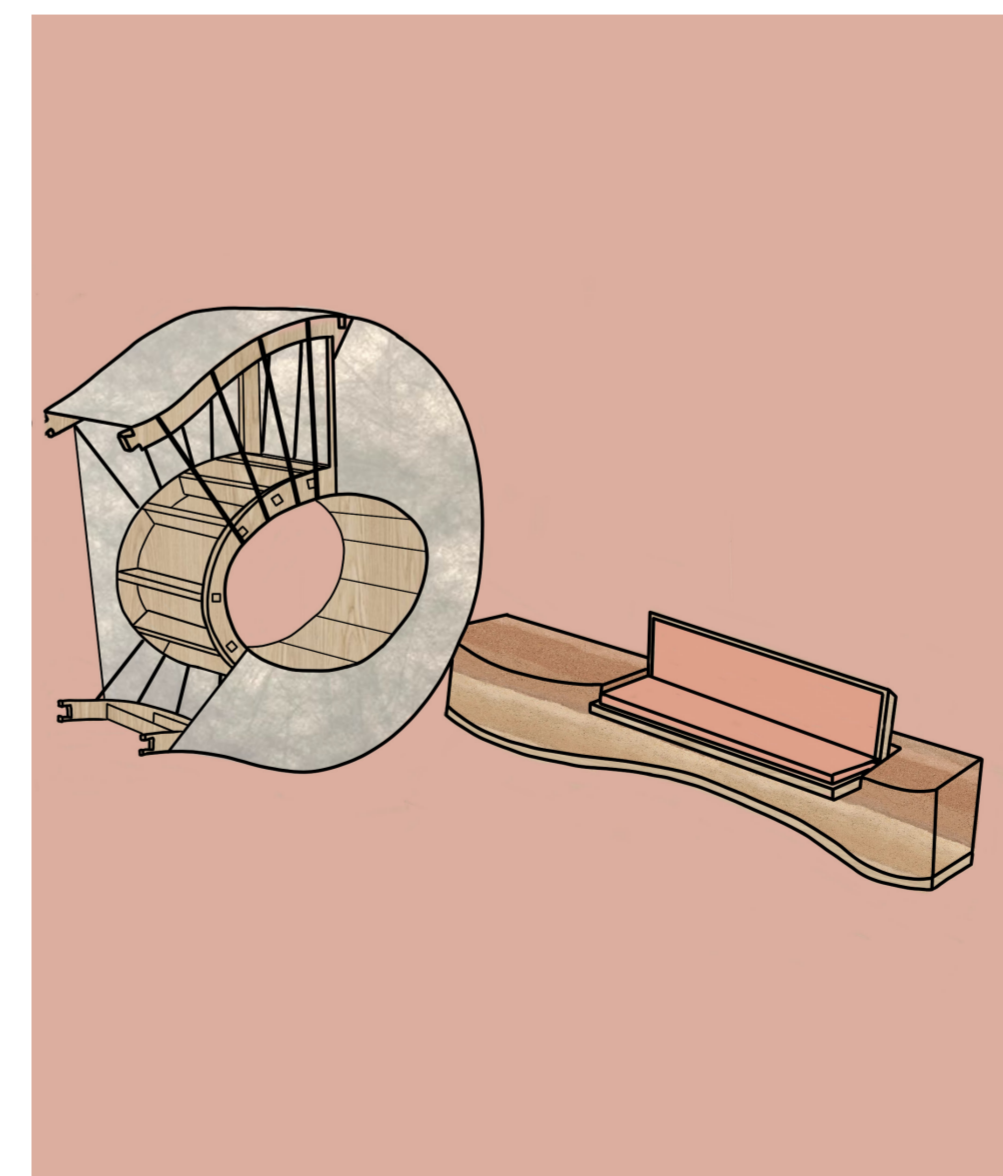
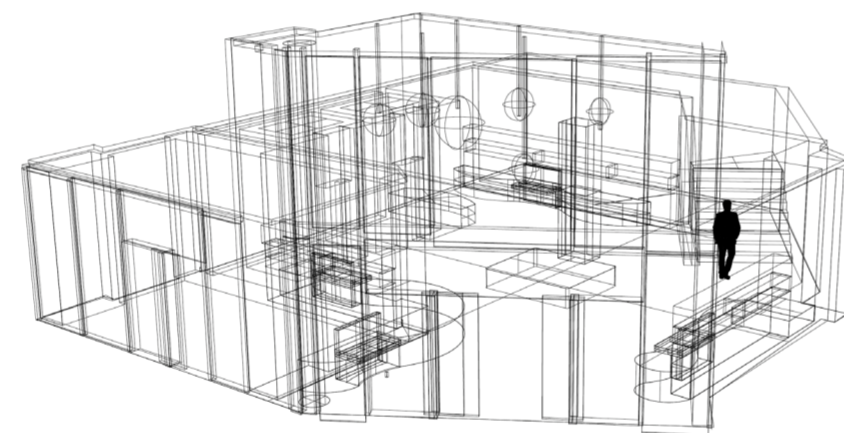
**100%**  
Recycleable material

The current library foyer serves mostly as a circulation area and provides little incentive for clients to stay. As a result, the design turns the lobby into a recovery threshold that promotes occupancy. Curved seating and gathering areas provide users the chance to stop, think, and get their bearings before entering the library, while the layout of the space gently directs movement rather than sending users straight up the stairs.





The design improves the link between the city, the shopping center, and the library by turning an underutilized circulation area into a significant architectural threshold. The design addresses the functional and emotional demands of its users by fostering an atmosphere that promotes pause, introspection, and transition. The lobby is transformed into an experience in and of itself by the thoughtful incorporation of natural materials, healing environments, and human-centered spatial design. The idea shows how well-considered interior modifications can reinvent underutilized areas, promoting wellbeing, enhancing relationships between people and location, and improving the process of learning.



Material detail study location in the design.